

**Minutes of a Meeting  
of  
Blackburn Diocesan Synod**

**held on Monday 19 July 2021 via Zoom**

**Present**

3 Members of the House of Bishops  
17 Members of the House of Clergy  
22 Members of the House of Laity

**Apologies**

12 Members of the House of Clergy  
6 Members of the House of Laity

**1. Opening Worship**

The meeting was chaired by **Rev Marc Wolverson**, Vice Chair of the House of Clergy. The meeting opened with worship led by **Bishop Jill**.

**2. Diocesan Board of Finance Annual General Meeting**

The Diocesan Board of Finance Annual General Meeting followed. The minutes were recorded separately.

**3. Budget 2022**

**Mr David Barlow**, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, presented the proposed Parish Share Budget for 2022.

He explained that any budget in the current circumstances includes an element of risk, risk equals faith and we go forward in faith in trust.

He reiterated the following key points from the Budget paper:

- The deficit, estimated at £490k will increase by approximately £300k if the Parish Share collection rate stays at circa 89%, the average percentage of the past 3 years. Over the past few years the actual outturn for the year has generally been less than the budget deficit estimated.

- The budget is prepared taking into account forecasts over a 3 year period and the Board anticipate using £3.4 million of reserves reducing the unrestricted free reserves to the minimum agreed by the Board.
- The Board are working towards a balanced Parish Share Budget in 2025, without recourse to significant increases in share request year on year, and have again agreed to limit the overall increase in budget to 3% each year for the next three years.
- To assist parishes the Board also anticipate that the Share Support Fund, used to help parishes who engage with the Board, will be reduced by 1% a year from 2022 from its current level of 8% to 5%.
- Our position has been helped by a robust investment performance over a number of years and we will continue to review our investments to ensure that we continue supporting parish ministry and if necessary continue the successful initiatives enabled by National Church Strategic Funding.

He thanked the Bishops Budget Team, the Budget Scrutiny Team and the Finance Team for preparing the budget.

The Synod then split into breakout groups to consider whether there was a question they would like to ask about the budget. Questions were then invited and the following was asked:

- On page 4 of the Budget Report the pie chart shows 6% on the chart and 7% below. Why is this?
- At Appendix 1, the titles change on the second column from 'Actual' to 'Forecast'.

In response to the first question, David Barlow replied that this was due to a rounding of figures.

In response to the second question, David Barlow responded that this should read 'Actual' throughout.

There were no other questions.

**As the meeting was not quorate, any decisions would need to be deferred to the next meeting.**

#### **4. New Education Measure**

**Canon Stephen Whittaker**, Director of Education, presented his report on the New Education Measure.

As a result of the new Measure, a new charity scheme is required for the Board of Education. The National Church had created a draft scheme which was attached to his paper and the principles behind this were included in the paper.

Comments were sought on the draft so that these could be taken back to National Church, with a final copy being presented to Diocesan Synod in October. If approved, it would then be possible to elect in accordance with the new scheme for the new triennium.

**Mrs Jacqueline Stamper** (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery) was keen to ensure that there would be some continuity so that not all the current elected members would be lost at once. However, this had already been taken into consideration in the paper and she was content with what was being put forward.

## 5. Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Accounts

**Canon Stephen Whittaker** presented the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2021.

The accounts were presented for information. He highlighted the Covid impact which had directly affected the DBE's work with children and youth support within churches. The DBE had delivered more digital work but this was the biggest impact.

They had also lost some face-to-face sessions with schools, although many visits had been carried out digitally and some lag into the next period was anticipated which would mean some additional costs.

Going forward into the current year, university chaplains had found their work particularly difficult with being remote and on Zoom.

Mr Whittaker confirmed that the DBE would once again be a going concern for the year ahead.

**Mrs Jacqueline Stamper** (Lancaster and Morecambe Deanery) expressed her gratitude to the DBE Team for the exceptional work they had carried out.

**Mr Peter Roberts** (Kirkham Deanery) asked if the costs incurred as a result of the Covid pandemic could be made more visible so they could be compared with another year.

**Mr Stephen Whittaker** replied that it would not be straightforward to separate the figure out, partially because they would not be known in full until the end of this year.

## 6. Proclamation of Canons

None.

## 7. Questions

The following question had been received by **Mrs Rosemary Lyon** (Leyland Deanery):

"For each of the years 2019 and 2020 many how many confidentiality or non-disclosure agreements were entered into by the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Finance Ltd and/or the Bishop of Blackburn in respect of:

- a. licensed or beneficed clergy leaving their posts
- b. employees of the Board of Finance leaving their employment?"

**Mr David Barlow** replied that in 2019 there had been one settlement agreement and in 2020 there had been three settlement agreements. It would not be appropriate to break them down further with the number being so small. There had been none in 2017 and 2018.

## 8. Motions

None.

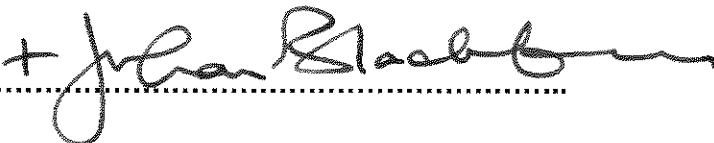
Because the meeting was not quorate, **Canon Graeme Pollard** suggested holding a short, interim Synod in early September to deal with the required business.

It was agreed that a weekday evening will be sought.

**Dean Peter Howell-Jones** emphasised that Diocesan Synod members have responsibilities and expressed his disappointment at the meeting not being quorate.

In the circumstances, **Rev Marc Wolverson** adjourned the meeting and thanked everyone present for attending.

The meeting closed with a prayer.

Signed: ..... 

Dated: ..... 